2%. the inspection agency agreed by the Grain Board of Iraq had inspected the cargo prior to shipment and declared the wheat consignments fit for human consumption and conforming to the quality specifications of the Iraqi order. However, on arrival of the consignments at Iraqi ports, the Grain Board of Iraq insisted on "nil" tolerance for inorganic foreign matter.

The Indian delegation that visited Iraq in May, 2001 was informed by Iraqi authorities that, according to their definition, they do not count sand particles under foreign matter. In other words, inorganic matter, which is a part and parcel of forcing matter, like sand, stones, pebbles, clay particles, etc., are not accepted under this category. The explanation given by them was that only organic foreign matter (like chaff, glumes, weed seeds and other edible and inedible grains) are taken under this category. This position was not known to the exporters. They presumed that, as in the CODEX standards, the 2% foreign matter would include upto 0.5% in organic matter. The delegation was further informed that the Iraqi flour mills were not having adequate facilities for separation of inorganic matter because of the problem of spare parts required for maintenance of such machines owing to UN sanctions. The delegation was told that the Iraqi authorities had accordingly taken a decision to reject any wheat stocks found with inorganic matter like sand, stones, etc. The delegation was further informed that Iraq had also rejected the wheat source from various other countries on the same grounds. The exporters have been given the freedom to identify wheat stocks available in the Central Pool for the purpose of export. However, on receipt of reports of rejection of wheat consignments from India, it was decided that no further consignment of wheat would be sent to Iraq, unless it was cleaned to meet the specification of the Grain Board of Iraq.

Legislation for agriculture labourers

*66. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to introduce a Comprehensive Central Legislation for agricultural labourers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have started any Bima Yojana to assist the farm labourers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) to (d) A proposal to enact a Central Legislation for the welfare of agricultural workers has been considered and discussed in the meetings of State Labour Minister and various other fora. However, no definite consensus in this respect could emerge. Government has launched Krishi Shramik Samajik Surkhsha Yojana—2001 for agricultural workers form 1st July, 2001. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will implement the Scheme in a phased manner. The following provisions of social security have been made under the Scheme:

(a) Life-cum-accident insurance,

(b) Money back, and

(c) Pension-cum-superannuation benefits.

Agricultural workers in the age group of 18 years to 50 years will be eligible under the Scheme. The worker will contribute Re. 1/per day or Rs. 365/ per year and the Government will pay Rs. 2/per day or Rs. 730/per year per beneficiary from the Social security Fund of India under the Scheme.

Distress sale of rice in Orissa

*67. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the increasing distress sale of rice in Orissa;

(b) whether farmers in Western Orissa are being exploited by the middlemen and the rice is being sold at a throw away price; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to rescue the farmers in the State from the clutches of middlemen?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a) Reports about alleged distress sale of paddy, and not rice, have been received from some districts of Orissa.

(b) FCI, as the procuring agent, purchases rice from the millers who, in turn, purchase paddy from the fanners. There are reports that paddy has been purchased from the farmers by middlemen for sale to the millers.